

Some People Are Suspicious Even Of A Good Samaritan

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MERTZON — An honest man lives a mighty lonesome life in the shortgrass country. It matters not if he has the Ten Commandments tattooed from his wrist to his elbow, these hombres out here won't trust him. Day after day they go around treating their fellow man as if every citizen were a second issue of Captain Hook.

For instance, last week a group of us threw in together and staged a ram sale. The county agent had planned all summer to have the area's buck raisers pull off the auction. You know how county agents are. They're unhappy unless they have the entire countryside disrupted by some new project.

The day before the sale, just as the first consignment of bucks arrived at the sale pens, a man with an out-of-state license drove up.

Now, the Good Book doesn't say specifically that you are supposed to be cordial to people from certain states, but it seemed only right to greet anyone who came by to visit. Therefore, to be nice, I climbed out of the buck pens and went out to welcome the stranger. Then, upon learning that he was interested in buying some bucks, I felt the only decent thing to do was to take him out to the ranch for a preliminary briefing on how to buy Texas sheep. I suggested to him that instead of hanging around talking to the other buck sellers, I'd be glad to take him out to my place.

We made a big "vuelta" over our country, looking at sheep and cattle. We must have burned 10 gallons of gas going from one watering place to another. Time sort of got away from us, and before we knew it, it was dark.

Next morning I was at the sale pens real early to help out with details of the sale to be held that afternoon. Also, I felt obligated to be around in case the out-of-stater showed up. Heaven knows a native, much less a stranger, has a hard time resisting the sales talk of a polished buck salesman.

It's a good thing the stranger didn't come early. He would have got a bad impression of Texas from the way my fellow consignors were acting. They picked on me something awful. Every time they opened their mouths, they'd be rude or smart-alecky. I got sick and tired of hearing how I'd taken a buyer off where nobody else could get a chance to talk to him. They were mad because they hadn't got a chance to load that old boy up with their own line of sheep propaganda.

As it turned out, their suspicions were wrong. In the hubbub of the auction the foreigner forgot all about using my gasoline and lapping up cold drinks the afternoon before. He didn't follow one word of my counsel and ended up buying some bucks from the other men.

There's no percentage in being honest and above-board in this country. From now, the outlanders can fend for themselves and the buck operators can go on their sneaky, suspicious ways.